

SERVICE EMPLOYEES INTERNATIONAL UNION LOCAL 668

Re: union

AUGUST, 1995

SEIU Local 668 Gears up for...

'96 State Contract Campaign

SEIU Local 668 held a contract planning summit meeting to gear up for the '96 State Contract Campaign. Participants included meet and discuss committee chairs and representatives, state business agents, SEIU Trustees and International staff. The purpose of the meeting was to:

- Set some internal/external goals for the contract campaign;
- Determine a process for putting together a bargaining team;
- Gain a deeper understanding of the political climate and its impact on bargaining;
- Assess our strengths and weaknesses;
- Begin work on developing a campaign theme and message;

Committee Chairs discussed common themes and key issues that threaten workers such as, welfare reform, block grants and privatization.

■ Key Decisions Made

The Committee Chairs determined that the bargaining team should be broad based and diverse. Also, geographic locations based on membership figures will be a factor. The following is a breakdown of how the negotiating team will be devised:

Rank and File:

- 8 representatives – elected geographically
- 3 representatives – CAO
- 2 representatives – OES
- 1 representative – MH/MR
- 1 representative – Mental Health



Breakout Meeting at State Contract Summit

- 1 representative – Mental Retardation
- 1 representative – Corrections
- 1 representative – OVR
- 1 representative – BDD
- 1 representative – YDC
- 1 representative – BVS
- 1 representative – OFAIR
- 1 representative – PHRC
- 1 representative – miscellaneous
- 1 representative – Senior Member

Supervisors:

- 2 representatives – CAO
- 1 representative – OES
- 1 representative – all other agencies

■ Bargaining Team Elections

The Bargaining Team will be elected by ballot voting. Interested candidates will submit nominating petitions (25 signatures are required for rank and file candidates; 5 signatures for supervisory candidates and 5 signatures for senior member candidates). A letter to all members will be sent out next week.

■ Campaign Message

The need for better communications and the importance of sending a message was discussed. It was agreed that SEIU 668 needs to create an image and educate the public. An ideal plan would:

- Promote our contract fight through the media;
- Gain public support for our campaign;
- Reach the middle class;

■ What Messages Do We Send?

We need to send a message and build an image that says:

- State employees offer invaluable and important services to the clients they serve;
- We love what we do and we care about the future of the clients and their families;

Continued on page 3

Reclaim America Campaign

By Deputy Trustee David McCann

In this month's edition of the Re:Union, you will find various articles describing the SEIU "Reclaim America" Campaign. Because of the negative impact of Congressional actions on our members, we all must be armed with knowledge and ready to take action to reclaim America for the workers, residents, and taxpayers. This event is only the first of many we must organize to bring our message to the public.

On July 7th, at a rally organized by SEIU Local 668, nearly one hundred union members from a dozen unions demonstrated at Congressman William Goodling's York, PA headquarters to protest his support of the Contract with America, block grants and the republican budget, the gutting of OSHA, and his support for repealing Clinton's order prohibiting federal contracts to companies who use permanent replacement workers.

A letter blown up on poster-board demanded that Goodling reconsider his support for these anti-worker policies and in particular his support for block grants which would cost Pennsylvania \$16 billion in federal tax revenues over the next seven years. The letter was delivered by a delegation to Goodling's office with television cameras recording every moment of the action.

During the same week, Local 668 members met with the editorial boards of the Harrisburg Patriot and the Gettysburg Times to explain why block grants would be harmful to Pennsylvania.

Goodling was targeted with direct action because he chairs the House Economic and Educational Oppor-

tunities Committee which has oversight responsibility for the federal budget and because he refused to meet with 668 members while supporting policies which eliminate 668 jobs and reduce services to people who need them.

The Goodling rally is part of SEIU's Reclaim America campaign which began in January 1995. The goal of the campaign is to educate Americans to the anti-worker nature of the conservative congressional agenda. The campaign believes that direct action by organized workers against those members of Congress who are leading this assault on workers is the best way to educate the broader public.

The 104th Congress, led by the Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich, Congressman Goodling, Senate Majority Leader Bob Dole and Senators Phil Gramm and Rick Santorum want to roll back the mini-

mum wage, child labor standards, the forty hour work-week and overtime pay; they propose eliminating the Service Contract Act, the Wagner-Peyser Act and OSHA; they propose a budget which cuts services to our clients and threatens the jobs of unionized and non-unionized state, local and municipal workers along with nursing home and hospital employees across the country.

Reclaim America actions have been organized in Washington D.C., Cleveland, Ohio, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh and York, Pennsylvania, Spokane, Washington, Atlanta, Georgia and dozens of other locations since January 1st. Reclaim America is about working Americans fighting back against this unprecedented attack on unions and working people. The Reunion will carry regular articles describing these activities and we ask you to join with us when the Reclaim America activities come to your area.

CIA's Lose Upgrade Bid

An arbitrator has denied Local 668's attempt to upgrade Claims Investigation Agents (CIAs) from pay range 6 to 7. We also sought a modification in their job specification.

Union witnesses clearly testified that their duties and responsibilities rose above their current job requirements. They demonstrated their record of recouping large amounts of money for the Commonwealth.

However, the arbitrator accepted the Commonwealth's argument that pay range 7 applicants had to meet education and experience standards higher than a pay range 6 applicant. Management also said it had no recruitment problems with current CIA standards.

Furthermore, the arbitrator agreed with management's contention that raising the pay of CIA's would create pay range difficulties between CIA's and the supervisors and managers to whom they report. The arbitrator did not rule on the job specification issue, instead remanding it to the parties to decide.

Contract Campaign

(Continued From page 1)

- Congress and Governor Ridge are planning to make drastic life threatening cuts to recipients of Pennsylvania's already underfunded social services.

■ Rigorous Campaign Planned

Bargaining the state contract seems in the distant future, but there is much work to be done over the next year. Welfare reform, block grants and privatization will affect every SEIU 668 member. Your job may be in jeopardy! We anticipate a long, hard battle and we need to start preparing now.

Contract bargaining will be extremely difficult. It is crucial that every member get involved. Without unity, solidarity and member participation there is no way to win this fight. We cannot do it without you!

Over the next year, SEIU 668 is planning a rigorous and energetic campaign. As we progress further into the campaign, we will be informing members of specific events and ways they can help.

In the near future we will be seeking your input. Look for questionnaires and surveys to be published in upcoming issues of the *Re:union* asking for your ideas and suggestions. **Fight back! Get involved in the fight to win a decent contract!**



◀ From left to right:
Jim Bruce
Paul Goutlieb
Audrey Wilson



From left to right: ▶
Joe Foley
Nancy Bennie
Ray Martinez
Gloria Smith

MEDICAID BLOCK GRANTS

Medicaid provides health insurance coverage for low-income families. Almost two-thirds of the benefits go toward the elderly and disabled, particularly for long-term services.

Congress wants to make major changes in Medicaid right away, without having to wait. When enrollment in a state rises, the federal government contributes more money to help the state shoulder the burden.

Congress wants to convert the program into a "block grant" where Pennsylvania would get a flat sum of money, regardless of how many people enrolled. They would limit the rate of growth in this block grant to 4% a year by the year 2002.

What's wrong with this? Plenty! Here are just a few of the bad things that would happen if Republicans succeed in doing this:

- Pennsylvania, already under fiscal pressure, would lose an additional \$2.9 billion over the next seven years. State, county and local governments are planning layoffs.
- Pennsylvania would be forced to eliminate Medicaid long-term care services for 115,000 elderly and disabled Pennsylvania residents by the year 2000.
- Pennsylvania would have to slash payment rates to hospitals, nursing homes and home care workers. Over 49,000 health care workers could lose their jobs.
- Pennsylvania's nursing homes would be particularly vulnerable because they get three-quarters of their revenue from Medicaid. Many would have to close their doors, throwing thousands of workers out in the street, and making it harder for families to get access to long-term care.

Rally Held to...

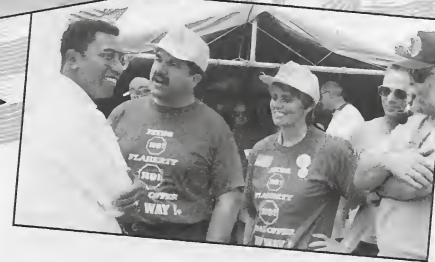
RECLAIM AMERICA



◀ Rally outside Rep. Goodling's York Office

From left to right: ▶

WGAL-TV's
Ron Martin
Richard Trumka
Sheila Velazco



As part of SEIU's "Reclaim America" campaign, York County union activists recently held a rally outside U. S. Representative Goodling's office to protest against the "Contract With America" campaign.

The so-called "Contract with America" claims to eliminate government interference, waste and bureaucracy. In reality, this plan would cut taxes for the rich and converts a number of important federal programs into block grants, costing Pennsylvania \$18 billion over the next seven years while endangering our jobs, our families and our future!

Activists from SEIU Local 668, United Auto Workers, United Steelworkers, Teamsters, International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers and International Ladies' Garment Workers participated in the York

event to urge Goodling not to turn his back on working Pennsylvanians.

Goodling, chairman of the House Economic and Educational Opportunities Committee, voted for a Balanced Budget Amendment which would cut taxes for the rich and convert important federal programs into block grants.

The Balanced Budget Amendment Endangers Our Jobs By:

- Eliminating 254,000 jobs;
- Raising taxes by 12.7%;
- Opposing minimum wage increases;
- Cutting the budget for OSHA;

The Balanced Budget Amendment Endangers Our Families By:

- Raising costs for Medicare beneficiaries by \$3,500;

- Eliminating long-term care services for the elderly and disabled;
- Costing the state roughly \$3 billion in Medicaid funds over the next five years.

The Balanced Budget Amendment Endangers Our Future By:

- Cutting federal spending on children by \$2.2 billion over the next five years—including, food stamps, AFDC, Head Start and other programs
- Depriving 269,000 poor children of health insurance.
- Eliminating school lunches for 975,000 children;
- Eliminating nutritional assistance to 233,000 families in Pennsylvania.

Speakers at the rally were SEIU Local 668 Trustee Sheila Velazco, United Mine Workers of America President Richard Trumka and United Steel Workers of America Legislative Director Jim DeBord

When the lunch time rally concluded, some union activists joined the United Auto Workers on their picket line outside the Caterpillar plant who have been on strike for over a year.

RECLAIM AMERICA!

**FOR OUR JOBS,
OUR FAMILIES,
OUR FUTURE!**

What 668 Members Should Know About:

Block Grants

Impact of Block Grants on Pennsylvania

Block grants mean pooling federal funding for various programs and services into lump sum payments to the states. The Republican Congress has initiated the most sweeping proposal to convert "entitlement programs," such as AFDC, child nutrition, and Medicaid – where federal funding automatically increases as more people qualify for these programs – into block grants with fixed funding levels.

Governor Ridge favors the block grant approach because he will gain control over how federal dollars can be spent – even though Pennsylvania will lose out on billions of federal funds in the process. The Republican block grant strategy will lead to \$11.6 billion in reduced federal funding for Pennsylvania over the next five years.

Key Points

- The goal of the Republicans is to cut overall funding for employment and training programs by up to 25%. Pennsylvania will lose nearly \$50 million in federal dollars in FY96 alone.

- A number of Republican initiatives would repeal, or substantially diminish the Wagner-Peyser Act – effectively doing away with the public employment service.
- If the Employment Service is privatized, the jobs of some 1,400 SEIU members who work in the employment security system in Pennsylvania would be in jeopardy.
- Pennsylvania would be forced to eliminate Medicaid long-term care services for 115,000 elderly and disabled Pennsylvania residents by the year 2000.
- Pennsylvania would have to slash payment rates to hospitals, nursing homes and home care workers. Over 49,000 health care workers could lose their jobs. Also, many of Pennsylvania's nursing homes would close their doors, throwing thousands of workers out in the streets.
- Proposed cuts in Medicaid would also deprive 269,000 poor children in Pennsylvania of their health insurance, adding to the 1.7% of Pennsylvanians who already lack coverage.

Northumberland County Workers Hold Solidarity Picnic

Recently, SEIU Local 668 members from Northumberland County (Mental Health/ Mental Retardation, Drug and Alcohol and Children and Youth) held their first annual solidarity picnic.

MH/MR Steward Dave Moser said the picnic was held to organize members around the upcoming state contract campaign and to sign up new members.

Despite the fact that many workers were on vacation and others were attending a training session, Moser said he was pleased with the 50% turnout.

Members were afforded an opportunity to socialize, discuss common issues and build unity. The event was held during the workers' lunch hour at a nearby state park.

EDITORIAL BOARD VISITS

SEIU Local 668 members and staff met with editors and writers of the Harrisburg Patriot News and the Gettysburg Times to discuss the negative impact block grants have on workers and the clients they serve.

The meetings were part of a week's long events ending with the Reclaim America rally to educate to public on block grants.

The Patriot News verbally committed to write an article around Labor Day with the understanding that SEIU Local 668 will supply additional information.

Ben Peters of York OVR said, "The editor of the Gettysburg Times was receptive to the group and appeared to be concerned about the impact of block grants, but was non-committal about how the news article would be handled."

Laura Potter of Gettysburg, who also attended the visit, said, "Help people first, then save money. Helping people is not being addressed. Money that is initially saved from block grants will result in greater financial loss later."

International Trustee Sheila Velazco, SEIU staffer Ken Grossinger, Chief Shop Steward Fred Hinton (Dauphin County Children and Youth) and Kim Cassell (Dauphin County MH/MR) also attended.

Wagner-Peyser Act Endangered

Lawmakers have proposed consolidating some or all 163 existing employment and training programs into one or more block grants to states. But the term "consolidation" is actually just a catchword to eliminate some programs and cut funding for others.

Lawmakers want to repeal employment and training programs – including the Wagner-Peyser Act. This Act establishes the U.S. Employment Service, the Trade Adjustment Assistance Act (provides income support and training impacted workers) the Job Training Partnership Act (provides training for welfare recipients).

The goal is to cut overall funding for employment and training programs by 25%. Most of the reductions will come from savings in administrative expenses once programs are converted into block grants. However block grants only save 2% to 5%. The cuts will come

from reductions in programs and services for workers

- If funding for employment and training programs is cut 25%, Pennsylvania will lose nearly \$50 million in federal dollars. The proposed cutbacks in funding for adult education programs would bring the dollar loss even higher.
- A number of initiatives would repeal or substantially diminish the Wagner-Peyser Act (doing away with the public employment service). Under this proposal, the job placement function would be privatized, forcing workers to pay for a service that is currently free.
- If the Employment Service is privatized, the job of members who work in the employment security in Pennsylvania would be in jeopardy.
- Pennsylvania currently receives \$35.3 million from the federal government for employment service administration. Pennsylvania could lose all of these funds if the Wagner-Peyser Act is eliminated.

Nurse Cleared of Abuse Charge

An employee at the Crawford County Car Center had her three-day suspension removed by an arbitrator who ruled allegations of past misconduct had no relationship to the current charge.

The registered nurse had been cited for unprofessional conduct and patient abuse involving a hard of hearing, elderly blind resident. Management's initial investigation cleared the nurse of the charge but it decided to retain the suspension, pinning it on prior alleged wrongdoings.

However, the arbitrator agreed with the union that the charges were not related.

Suspension Sticks

An arbitrator upheld a one-day suspension for a prison staffer for unprofessional manners and statements.

The Corrections Vocational Coordinator was charged with inappropriate remarks in a phone conversation with another staffer. He was also accused of unprofessional conduct while performing an orientation session. He had a prior discipline for a similar offense just two months before.

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